General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 February 2009

Sixty-third session
Agenda item 49 (*c*)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/63/414/Add.3)*]

63/217. Natural disasters and vulnerability

The General Assembly,

Recalling its decision 57/547 of 20 December 2002 and its resolutions 58/215 of 23 December 2003, 59/233 of 22 December 2004, 60/196 of 22 December 2005 and 61/200 of 20 December 2006,

Reaffirming the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development[1] and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation").[2]

Reaffirming also the Hyogo Declaration[3] and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,[4] adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction,

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[5]

Recognizing the need to continue to develop an understanding of, and to address, the underlying risk factors, as identified in the Hyogo Framework for Action, including socio-economic factors, that exacerbate the vulnerability of societies to natural hazards, to build and further strengthen the capacity at all levels to cope with disaster risks and to enhance resilience against hazards associated with disasters, while also recognizing the negative impact of disasters on economic growth and sustainable development, in particular in developing countries and disaster-prone countries,

Emphasizing the importance of addressing vulnerability and integrating risk reduction into all phases of disaster management, post-disaster recovery and development planning,

---

[1] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[2] Ibid., resolution 2, annex.

[3] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 1.

[4] Ibid., resolution 2.

[5] See resolution 60/1.

Recognizing the need to integrate a gender perspective in the design and implementation of all phases of disaster risk reduction management, with a view to reducing vulnerability,

Noting that the global environment continues to suffer degradation, adding to economic and social vulnerabilities, in particular in developing countries,

Taking into account the various ways and forms in which all countries, in particular the more vulnerable countries, are affected by severe natural hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides and volcanic eruptions and extreme weather events such as heatwaves, severe droughts, floods and storms, and the El Niño/La Niña events which have global reach,

Expressing deep concern at the recent increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and associated natural disasters in some regions of the world and their substantial economic, social and environmental impacts, in particular upon developing countries in those regions,

Taking into account that geological and hydrometeorological hazards and their associated natural disasters and their reduction must be addressed in a coherent and effective manner,

Noting the need for international and regional cooperation to increase the capacity of countries to respond to the negative impacts of all natural hazards, including earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides and volcanic eruptions and extreme weather events such as heatwaves, severe droughts and floods, and associated natural disasters, in particular in developing countries and disaster-prone countries,

Bearing in mind the importance of addressing disaster risks related to changing social, economic, environmental conditions and land use, and the impact of hazards associated with geological events, weather, water, climate variability and climate change, in sector development planning and programmes as well as in post-disaster situations,

Stressing that the impacts of natural disasters are severely hampering efforts in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and emphasizing the importance of reducing vulnerabilities to natural disasters,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of its resolution 61/200;[6]

2. *Urges* the international community to continue to address ways and means, including through development cooperation and technical assistance, to reduce the adverse effects of natural disasters, including those caused by extreme weather events, in particular in vulnerable developing countries, including least developed countries and in Africa, through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, including the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, and encourages the institutional arrangement for the International Strategy to continue its work in this regard;

3. *Recognizes* that each State has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and for taking effective measures to reduce disaster risk,

[6] A/63/351

including for the protection of people on its territory, infrastructure and other national assets from the impact of disaster, including the implementation and follow-up of the Hyogo Framework for Action, and stresses the importance of regional and international cooperation and partnerships to support those national efforts;

4. *Stresses* the importance of the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action and the priorities for action that States, regional and international organizations and international financial institutions as well as other concerned actors should take into consideration in their approach to disaster risk reduction and implement, as appropriate, according to their own circumstances and capacities, bearing in mind the vital importance of promoting a culture of prevention in the area of natural disasters, including through the mobilization of adequate resources for disaster risk reduction, and of addressing disaster risk reduction, including disaster preparedness at the community level, and the adverse effects of natural disasters on efforts to implement national development plans and poverty reduction strategies with a view to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

5. *Recognizes* the importance of considering enhanced action on adaptation, including, inter alia, risk management and risk reduction strategies, including risk sharing and transfer mechanisms such as insurance, and disaster reduction strategies and means to address loss and damage associated with climate change impacts in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change;

6. *Expresses its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural disasters and the increasing challenges posed by the consequences of natural disasters, as well as the impact of climate change, to all countries, in particular developing countries, especially small island developing States and least developed countries, as well as other particularly vulnerable countries;

7. *Encourages* continued and greater support by the international community for adaptation strategies, particularly in countries vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, in order to contribute to disaster management efforts, and encourages enhanced coordination between adaptation strategies and disaster management strategies;

8. *Encourages* Governments, through their respective International Strategy for Disaster Reduction national platforms and national focal points for disaster risk reduction, in cooperation with the United Nations system, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other stakeholders, to strengthen capacity-building in the most vulnerable regions, to enable them to address the social, economic and environmental factors that increase vulnerability, and to develop measures that will enable them to prepare for and cope with natural disasters, including those associated with earthquakes and extreme weather events, and encourages the international community to provide effective assistance to developing countries in this regard;

9. *Emphasizes*, in order to build resilience, particularly in developing countries, especially those vulnerable among them, the importance of addressing the underlying risk factors identified in the Hyogo Framework for Action, promoting the integration of risk reduction associated with geological and hydrometeorological

hazards in disaster risk reduction programmes and enhancing knowledge and public awareness of disaster risk reduction;

10. *Stresses* that, in order to reduce vulnerability to natural hazards, risk assessments should be integrated into disaster risk reduction programmes at national and local levels;

11. *Encourages* the institutional arrangement for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to continue, within its mandate, particularly the Hyogo Framework for Action, to enhance the coordination of activities to promote natural disaster risk reduction and to make available to Member States, the relevant United Nations entities and other relevant stakeholders information on options for natural disaster risk reduction, including severe natural hazards and extreme weather-related disasters and vulnerabilities;

12. *Stresses* the importance of close cooperation and coordination among Governments, the United Nations system, and other international and regional organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and other partners such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as appropriate, taking into account the need for the development of disaster management strategies encompassing prevention, preparedness and response, including the effective establishment of early warning systems that are, inter alia, people-centred, while taking advantage of all available resources and expertise for that purpose;

13. *Also stresses* that, to reduce vulnerability to all natural hazards, including geological and hydrometeorological events and associated natural disasters, closer and more systematic cooperation, and information-sharing on disaster preparedness among the scientific and academic communities and disaster managers at all levels, should be strengthened;

14. *Encourages* the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[7] and the parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[8] to continue to address the adverse effects of climate change, especially in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and also encourages the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to continue to assess the adverse effects of climate change on the socio-economic and natural disaster reduction systems of developing countries;

15. *Calls upon* the international community, in particular the developed countries, to provide adequate and predictable resources and access to and transfer of technology, as mutually agreed, to developing countries vulnerable to the adverse effects of natural hazards with a view to enhancing their adaptation capacity;

16. *Stresses* the need to address risk reduction of and vulnerabilities to all natural hazards, including geological and hydrometeorological hazards;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session on the implementation of the present resolution, and decides to

---

[7] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[8] Ibid., vol. 2303, No. 30822.

consider the issue of natural disasters and vulnerability at that session, under the sub-item entitled "International Strategy for Disaster Reduction" of the item entitled "Sustainable development".

72nd plenary meeting
19 December 2008